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ABSTRACT

Indiana's Comprehensive Action Plan (I-CAP) provides a framework for program excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement in adult education. The action plan includes guiding principles and benchmarks for quality programs. Adult education programs are evaluated annually on these 10 established principles of program quality: educational gains; educational outcomes; retention; recruitment; program orientation; program planning, administration, and evaluation; curriculum and instruction; support services; professional development; and technology. The evaluation process is designed to measure and monitor the ability of local adult education programs to achieve high standards and implement continuous improvement at all levels. A mechanism is provided for evaluating programs based on federal law, state statute, and rule. Programs failing to meet the established benchmarks are required to submit local improvement plans addressing areas of deficiency. Regional consultants from the Division of Adult Education work with programs to address deficiencies. If measurable improvement is not shown within six months, the director of adult education assigns a State Technical Assistance Team comprised of individuals with expertise in the areas of need. Each team provides additional assistance, monitors progress, and recommends whether funding should continue. (An attachment contains the Benchmarks for Quality Programs.) (YLB)

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ED 473 586

Indiana Department of Education
Division of Adult Education

Indiana's Comprehensive Action Plan for Adult Education Programs

Purpose

Indiana's Comprehensive Action Plan (i-CAP) provides a framework for program excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement in adult education. The Indiana Department of Education, Division of Adult Education, measures progress through federal and state indicators of program quality by reports and self-assessments, in addition to on-site reviews conducted with local programs.

The action plan includes Guiding Principles and Benchmarks for Quality Programs. It also provides a mechanism for evaluating programs based on federal law, state statute, and rule.

Programs failing to meet the established benchmarks will be required to submit local improvement plans that address the areas of deficiency. The head of the agency or superintendent will be informed. Regional consultants from the Division of Adult Education will work with programs to address the deficiencies.

If measurable improvement is not shown within six months, the director of adult education will assign a State Technical Assistance Team of individuals with expertise in the areas of need. The team will provide additional assistance, monitor progress, and recommend whether funding should continue. A provider may appeal the decision in writing to the state director of adult education within 30 days if funding is discontinued.

Guiding Principles for Quality Programs

Adult education programs are evaluated annually based on established principles of program quality. (Benchmarks for Quality Programs are contained in Attachment A.)

1. **Educational Gains** – Learners demonstrate progress toward attainment of basic skills and competencies that support their educational needs.

2. **Educational Outcomes** – Learners advance in the instructional program by setting and meeting core performance measures.

3. **Retention** – Learners remain in the program long enough to achieve educational goals.

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4. **Recruitment** – Programs successfully recruit the populations in the community as identified by needs assessments or demographic data.

5. **Program Orientation** – Services, procedures, and policies reflect a commitment to developing basic and functional literacy skills required for adults to enhance their lives.

6. **Program Planning, Administration, and Evaluation** – Programs have a planning process that is ongoing and participatory; guided by evaluation; and based on a written plan that considers community demographics, needs, resources, economic trends, and local conditions. Programs promote evaluation and continuous improvement.

7. **Curriculum and Instruction** – Programs have curricula and instruction geared to individual needs and learning styles based on current research and practice.

8. **Support Services** – Programs identify learners' needs for support services to assist in determining how these options can be offered directly or through referral to other agencies.

9. **Professional Development** – Programs have a plan for an ongoing professional development process that addresses specific staff needs, considers training in the areas necessary to provide quality instruction, and includes opportunities for practice and follow-up.

10. **Technology** – Programs successfully integrate technology as demonstrated by classroom experiences, professional development opportunities, and enhanced administrative functions.

Evaluations and Local Self-Assessments

The evaluation process is designed to measure and monitor the ability of local adult education programs to achieve high standards and implement continuous improvement at all levels. While the goal is to increase basic skills, programs must also meet established performance levels with regard to high school completion, further education and training, and employment.

Furthermore, several state requirements, including recruitment and retention, program orientation and planning, instruction, support services, professional development, and technology requirements must be satisfied.

In this manner, administrators can promote continuous improvement by determining whether (1) they are serving a sufficient number of adult learners, (2) learners are attending classes on a regular basis to meet their goals, (3)

learners are achieving substantial gains and outcomes, and (4) administrative and instructional staffs are committed to professional development opportunities that ensure their effectiveness.

Federal guidelines emphasize learner follow-up as a means to report outcomes. At a minimum, programs are expected to conduct follow-up through written or telephone communication on at least 50 percent of the learners who indicate high school completion, further education and training, and employment as goals.

The annual evaluation for selected providers includes a self-assessment and on-site review. The self-assessment focuses, in part, on the analysis of federal and state reports, including the annual performance report. The purpose of the self-assessment is to serve as a tool for promoting continuous improvement by enabling providers to determine strengths and weaknesses and to assist the Division of Adult Education in determining technical assistance needs of local programs.

Failing to Meet the Benchmarks for Quality Programs

A program not meeting at least 60 percent of the Benchmarks for Quality Programs contained in Attachment A will be required to submit an improvement plan to the Division of Adult Education within 30 days of notification of an unsatisfactory review. The head of the agency or superintendent will be notified.

The improvement plan will include measurable objectives for addressing the areas of deficiency. A regional consultant will provide technical assistance to programs in need of improvement and monitor the progress toward correcting the deficiencies during the next six months.

If the regional consultant determines that little or no improvement has been made, a State Technical Assistance Team will be assigned by the state director of adult education to assist the program in addressing the deficiencies. The team will be comprised of individuals with expertise in the areas of need. This may include, but not be limited to, state staff, regional professional development team members, teachers, and local administrators.

The State Technical Assistance Team will recommend to the state director of adult education, no later than six months after its appointment, whether additional action is necessary and whether the program should receive continued funding. The team may choose to suggest other programs that could offer services in the area if funding to the current provider is suspended. The provider may appeal the decision in writing within 30 days of notification. Programs may also reapply during subsequent funding periods.

Attachment A

Benchmarks for Quality Programs

Adult education programs should meet or exceed state benchmarks to ensure program quality.

☐ 1. **Educational Gains** - Forty-one percent of enrollees completed one or more educational levels in 2000-2001. Comprehensive program providers should meet or exceed its negotiated levels. Programs that receive only state funding should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 2. **Educational Outcomes** - Fifty-three percent of learners who had further education as a goal enrolled in post-secondary education or training in 2000-2001. Sixty-two percent with an employment goal obtained unsubsidized employment. Sixty-three percent with improved employment as a goal retained unsubsidized employment. Forty-six percent with high school completion as a goal earned a GED or diploma. Comprehensive providers should meet or exceed its negotiated levels. Programs that receive only state funding should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 3. **Retention** - The average number of contact hours per learner is 73 (based on the years 1997-2001). All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 4. **Recruitment** - All levels of adults from beginning literacy through high adult secondary education are served. State-funded programs must have a program average of 10 learners per unit of instruction to qualify for full state reimbursement. All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 5. **Program Orientation** – Pre-tests using state-approved instruments are administered during specified times. Adult learning plans (ALPs) are initially written with learners actively involved in the process. Policies and procedures reflect current research and practice in adult learning. All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 6. **Program Planning, Administration, and Evaluation** – Services are coordinated in all program areas. Participation on an active coordinating council is evident by attendance at three meetings during the program year. Programs demonstrate diverse demographics, needs, resources, and local conditions in

applications for funding. All programmatic and fiscal reports are submitted on time. Resources are expended to benefit learners. All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 7. **Curriculum and Instruction** – Programs use curricula and instruction geared to individual needs and learning styles based on current research and practice. Adult learning plans (ALPs) are reviewed and updated. Learners continue to be actively involved in the process. Post-tests using state-approved instruments are administered during specified times. Teachers participate in professional development opportunities. All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 8. **Support Services** – Programs have identified learners' needs for support and have made services available to adults directly or through referrals to other agencies. Learners are satisfied with these services and use them on a regular basis. All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 9. **Professional Development** – Programs provide an ongoing professional development process for all staff that considers individual needs, offers training in the skills necessary to provide quality instruction, and incorporates training in actual practice and follow-up. Professional development facilitators (PDFs) provide an active role in the training process where applicable. Additionally, program administrators participate in the i-LEAD model (Indiana Leadership Initiative for Adult Education – competencies for program management) by identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement for themselves and their programs. If requested, administrators will participate in the coaching project. All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

☐ 10. **Technology** – Programs have successfully integrated technology into the learning experience through distance education, computers, and other electronic communication. Teachers have been provided professional development on integrating technology into the classroom. Administrators and their programs will use technology effectively to enhance administrative functions. All programs should meet or exceed the state benchmark.

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